United Nations S/2004/177

Security Council

Distr.: General
5 March 2004

Original: English

Letter dated 26 February 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the situation in Darfur, Sudan, issued on 25 February 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Richard **Ryan**
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

04-26134 (E) 080304

Annex to the letter dated 26 February 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Statement on the situation in Darfur, Sudan, issued on 25 February 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union wishes to express its serious concern at the situation in the Darfur region of western Sudan. The scale of the humanitarian crisis continues to escalate, with internally displaced persons estimated to be in excess of 700,000 requiring urgent humanitarian assistance. The European Union calls on the Government of the Sudan to grant United Nations agencies and other relief organizations continued and full access to all areas of Darfur, as the plight of the local populations requires urgent attention. The European Union recalls its concern expressed in the joint communiqué resulting from the EU-Sudan political dialogue held in Khartoum on 18 December 2003 and its appeal to "all the parties to ensure protection of the civilian population and to allow for unhindered humanitarian access for the population in need".

The European Union is alarmed at reports that Janjaweed militias continue to systematically target villages and centres for internally displaced persons in their attacks. The European Union strongly condemns the attacks and calls upon the Government of the Sudan to put an end to Janjaweed atrocities. The European Union also calls on the Government of the Sudan to thoroughly investigate the attacks carried out and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice. The European Union calls on the rebel groups operating in the Darfur region to commit themselves to providing safe passage to relief agencies and refrain from any activity that harms the delivery of relief. The European Union also urges all parties to the conflict to agree to an immediate ceasefire and to restore stability to the region through facilitated peace talks.